

against attack. And we made an unprecedented investment in homeland security.

Did we get it all right? Of course not. Only hindsight is 20/20. But through those efforts, and the grace of God, we have avoided additional attacks on American soil. There is no doubt in my mind that the American people are safer today because of the heroic actions of our men and women who serve in our armed services and intelligence agencies and because of the actions taken here by our Congress.

It is popular these days to ask political figures what mistakes they have made, where they have failed. As a former history teacher, I know such analysis is best tempered by time and reflection, and that is probably best left to others.

But I will say this: I continue to worry about the breakdown of civility in our political discourse. I tried my best, but I wish I had been more successful. When I addressed this Chamber for the first time as your Speaker, I noted that "solutions to problems cannot be found in a pool of bitterness." Those words are as true today as they were then.

We each have a responsibility to be passionate about our beliefs. That is healthy government. But we also have a responsibility to be civil, to be open-minded, and to be fair; to listen to one another; to work in good faith to find solutions to the challenges facing this Nation.

□ 1445

That is why the American people sent us here. They did not send us here just to get reelected.

As Speaker, I served with two Presidents. President Clinton and I worked together to fight the flow of drugs from Colombia, drugs that destroy the lives of our children. And despite our differences on some issues, we were able to find common ground on others.

For most of my years as Speaker, President Bush has been our wartime President. I believe history will judge him as a man of courage and foresight as well as resolve. I must say, I was proud to serve by his side and honored to call him a friend.

No Member of Congress could succeed in serving his or her constituents without the help of a dedicated staff. They often worked long hours, hard days. Many of them gave some of their most productive years to this institution, and I want to thank all of them and each of them for their service. And I also want to thank all of the people who make and have made this great body function on a daily base: the officers of the House, the Capitol Police, the Chaplain, the permanent staff. They are dedicated professionals who I came to appreciate even more during my years as Speaker.

I am also blessed to have a family that helped me every day over these 21 years. My two sons, Josh and Ethan, my daughter-in-law, Heidi, and our

newest addition, my grandson, Jack Hastert. Most importantly, I want to thank my wife, Jean, who is here in the gallery. Thank you, Jean, for the love and the help you have given me.

In 2003, during the Cannon Centenary Conference on the Changing Nature of the Speakership, I said that at the end of the day the Speaker of the House is really just the person who stands up for the American people. That is the same role that every man and woman who serves here should play. Our Founders dreamed of a Nation, a Nation empowered by freedom, where citizens would find justice, where hardworking men and women would find economic opportunity.

Each of us who comes to this place has different ideas of how to preserve and enhance that dream. It is on the floor of this House where those ideas clash, peacefully, and through that struggle our democracy is renewed.

Never lose sight of the fact that you participate in the greatest ongoing democratic ritual in the world. We are, as President Reagan often reminded us, "A Shining City on a Hill." Always be mindful of your duties to your constituents and be respectful of the traditions of this institution.

I pray that God will guide you in all that you do in these Halls; that He gives you the knowledge to do the people's work, the strength to persevere, and the wisdom to know when to listen to what others have to say.

Madam Speaker, there is a tradition among Olympic wrestlers that you leave your shoes on the mat after your last match. Don't be alarmed, Madam Speaker, I won't be challenging the rules of decorum by removing my shoes on the House floor. But I do hope that I have left a few footprints behind that may be of value to those who come after me, just as I have benefited from the footprints of those who I followed to this most wonderful of institutions, the people's House.

May God bless each of you. May God bless this House. May God bless the United States of America.

Good-bye, friends.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOYER). The Chair now recognizes the distinguished gentlelady from California, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, NANCY PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, my colleagues. I accept that recognition as a recognition of the role of Speaker of the House, a role that DENNIS HASTERT performed with great distinction, and I rise to salute his leadership, Mr. Speaker.

My colleagues, you have heard me say on a number of occasions in relationship to DENNIS HASTERT that in the Congress, as Members of Congress, we hold the title "Honorable" by virtue of our office that we hold. But in the case of DENNIS HASTERT, he holds the title of "Honorable" not just for the office he holds, but by virtue of his character, his leadership, and his contributions to our country.

About a year and a half ago in June we all observed a celebration for Speaker DENNIS HASTERT when he became the longest-serving Republican Speaker of the House.

Long may his record stand.

That milestone was testament to the great respect he commanded not only in the Republican Conference but in this Congress as a whole and in our country. Thank you, DENNIS HASTERT, for your record of achievement.

I want to acknowledge someone who had a role that I once had, minority leader, who is with us today and honors us with his presence and again is a tribute to the leadership of DENNIS HASTERT, Minority Leader Bob Michel.

Many of you know but I think it always bears repeating that DENNIS HASTERT has long had a commitment to our country, first as a teacher: for 16 years, a teacher of our children, and a coach, as he reminds us.

He then went on to the State legislature in Illinois where he served for 6 years. And then in 1986 he came to the Congress of the United States where he has served with great distinction and with many accomplishments, and he enumerated some earlier.

In 1999, this Congress elected him the Speaker of the House. The Speaker of the House. He brought to that office the values of the heartland of America and the wishes and the voice for the people of Illinois' 14th Congressional District, and we have all benefited from that.

Although we have from time to time on occasion differed on issues, I remember once, we all agree on the importance of public service, the kind of public service that has been the hallmark of Speaker HASTERT's career, whether in the classroom or in the Congress of the United States.

Today I want to join my friend, DENNIS, in saluting Jean for sharing DENNIS with us for all these years and for her role as a teammate to him and his contributions to our country. And thanks to Joshua and Ethan and to your entire family.

Mr. Speaker, and by that Mr. Speaker I am speaking to Speaker DENNIS HASTERT, I know I speak for everyone in this House when I thank you for your service, for many things, which I could enumerate, but I want to mention one in particular which I have mentioned to this House before.

We all were part of history when Rosa Parks became the first African American woman to lie in state under the Capitol dome. It was a great day for Congress and for our country. It simply would not have happened without the leadership of Speaker DENNIS HASTERT.

As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure for me to say I know I speak for every Member of this House, but I know I do when I say thank you for your leadership, congratulations on a great career. I know great things are yet to come.

Best wishes to you and your family. Godspeed in your future. God truly